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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [AF](#) [NO](#) [PGOV](#) [PPD](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN OUTREACH: INSPIRED PROPOSAL FOR  
EUROPEAN HUB BY AFGHAN AMBASSADOR TO NORDICS

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Kevin M Johnson  
for reasons 1.4 b and d

¶1. (C) Summary. In a July 30 meeting Ambassador Whitney discussed with Jawed Ludin, Afghan Ambassador accredited to the five Nordic countries, public diplomacy outreach in Norway and beyond. Ludin was inspired by the recent seminar on public diplomacy sponsored by State to propose an Afghan hub for outreach in Europe. Ludin is uniquely placed to do public outreach because of his background and his success in the media; he has made a significant difference to the debate in Norway. His proposal which will shortly be sent to Washington is an important opportunity for the USG to support Afghan public diplomacy in Europe, led by someone who "gets it". End Summary.

The Meeting

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¶2. (C) Ludin is a dynamic and successful Ambassador. Drawing from his experiences as former spokesperson for the Afghan government and close colleague of President Karzai, he is savvy with the media and regularly contributes op-eds or comments to the Norwegian press. He praised the June State sponsored public diplomacy seminar and said it inspired him to look at additional ways to get positive messages out. He is planning to host Nordic tours of a delegation of Afghani women parliamentarians, a group of Afghan journalists, and several Afghan ministers during the fall. He believes that Afghanistan will be an important issue in the upcoming Norwegian elections and aims to get out the good news, which is often buried in Norwegian media. He will host a luncheon for the US, UK, Canadian, Dutch, and Danish Ambassadors in September to try to coordinate public diplomacy outreach on Afghanistan and identify ways to encourage the GON to do more in Afghanistan, especially on the military side.

An Inspired Proposal: An Afghan Outreach Hub

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¶3. (C) Ludin noted that the greatest constraint on public outreach by Afghani missions in Europe is lack of capacity. To help offset this problem, he has developed a written proposal which he expects to send later this week to the State Department. His idea is that the USG fund (through an NGO or other entity) a communications hub in one of the Afghan embassies in Europe. This hub would be composed of two people who would monitor and analyze news out of Afghanistan. They would then send proactive pieces to all the Afghan Ambassadors in Europe to arm them with points to use in the media. The goal would be to broaden understanding of dramatic progress in Afghanistan, swiftly counter negative narratives, identify keys to success and the need for European engagement, all in products designed to appeal to European audiences. (The concept is similar in some ways to our rapid responses or press guidance pieces.)

¶4. (C) A further refinement that might be possible would be for the hub to be responsible for some regional programming.

For example, coordinating and funding a tour through European capitals of Afghani teachers to discuss progress in girls' education in Afghanistan.

Comment

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5.(C) Ludin is one of the most effective Ambassadors in Oslo. His proposal is a thoughtful response to the public diplomacy training State provided. We hope Washington will take a careful look at the proposal and identify ways to work with Ludin to build on it. Given his background as spokesman for Karzai and activism, he would be natural leader if the hub were set up in Oslo. Having it the "moral North", where development is stressed over security also has its advantages. Ludin himself, however, strongly supports the USG approach.

WHITNEY